

INTRODUCTION

From the desk of Chief Justice I. Beverly Lake, Jr., The Supreme Court of North Carolina:

As dedicated court employees, we want the public to know we are doing a good job and are putting our limited resources to good use. Each time we pick up the phone, speak to a civic club or talk to a neighbor about our jobs, we are shaping the image people have of the court system. Developing good working relationships with the news media also aids in getting accurate stories before the public.



We can best tell our story through the news media when we understand the difficulties of reporters' jobs and work with them so that they will fairly and accurately represent court policies and actions. Openness builds credibility and enhances the court system's reputation. At the same time, we must encourage quality reporting.

All court employees should be honest and accurate and should stay within the limits of their knowledge and the scope of their authority when talking with reporters. When problems arise, it should be clear that the court system tries to quickly correct them, allowing the press to scrutinize our efforts. This means agreeing to interviews with reporters, communicating in good times and bad.

A good reputation can help build community and legislative support, attract quality job applicants, strengthen relationships with fellow agencies and establish good will.

This handbook is provided to give you some basic tips on how to work effectively with the news media and to assist you in developing a plan for communication.

- Chapter One: All Media Are Not the Same
- Chapter Two: Interviews
- Chapter Three: Making Corrections
- Chapter Four: Crisis Communications
- Chapter Five: Media Policy
- Chapter Six: Communication Plans
- Chapter Seven: Public Records
- Chapter Eight: Helpful links